Come Find Me

AN
AUTUMNAL
OFFERING

FEATURING STORIES BY

HamletMachine
Becky Cloonan
Molly Mendoza
Vanesa R. Del Rey
Cèline Loup
E.M. Carroll

DSTLRY

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DSTLRY

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COVER A - BECKY CLOONAN

Come Find Me

An Autumnal Offering

Will Dennis & Sean Edgar ***editors***

Erika Schnatz ***design***

Tiny Onion, Inc. ***packaging***

I. Devil's Trill

HamletMachine

Joe Pavelka

Lucas Gattoni

II. Portorium

Becky Cloonan

Lee Loughridge

Pat Brousseau

III. Down By The Water

Molly Mendoza

Lucas Gattoni

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Vanesa R. Del Rey

Andrew Betsch

John Starr

Lee Loughridge

Lucas Gattoni

V. La Chèta

Céline Loup

Pat Brousseau

VI. The Warmth of the Hunt

E.M. Carroll

DSTLRY

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I.

Prague is a city of ghosts.

Her very stones are soaked with them.

They drew me here with their songs—a whispered dissonance only I am attuned to, as a living ghost myself, invisible to my peers.

They sing of alchemists and magicians, those who sought the divine within the earthly.

HOUSLÍ

As do I...

...though fruitlessly, yet.

Devil's Trill

by Hamlet Machine and Joe Pavelka with Lucas Gattoni

But tonight, a new harmony drowns out the whispers.

At last, the divine has shown itself to me!

That sound~ it haunts me.

Something about this particular tone, like a lantern illuminating an ancient ruin.

After a lifetime of searching, it is suddenly so clear.

Before this night, I knew that earthly flesh brought forth the most divine tone.

Bone, hair, gut~these are the materials of my instruments, now made woefully hoarse by this new song.

Now it is clear to me: dead material is inadequate~ the *destrudo* must be in harmony with the *libido*.

True Music comes from suffering, and the dead cannot suffer.

This sound, this corpus~ to have it in my hands... ***but how?***

How can one shape this into an instrument?

I must have it.

I am consumed.

Desperate.

The whispers return, and answer.

They sing in a trill that gnaws at my ears.

This place—there is an ancient power sealed here, and my desire has awakened it.

Do my eyes play tricks?

Shadows seep from the walls, and take form!

The trill becomes a **voice.**

It offers a wager.

If I seduce this object of my desire under its conditions, it will grant me what I ask, no matter how forbidden.

Should I fail, I forfeit my immortal soul.

What good is a soul that would only languish in desire?

I agree to its terms.

It decides to make things interesting.

I feel~hear~ my flesh rend.

It means to disfigure me, to sculpt me into a horror.

The pain is... *immaculate.*

In the darkness that follows, revelation.

My senses are ***heightened*** as I begin the work.

I merge with my instrument.

Tendons and nerves become string.

Blood becomes rosin.

I play the song of whispers; the notes I'd heard since my pilgrimage to this place.

The sweet, sweet suffering flows into the performance~this is the **True Music!**

She cannot resist it.

She comes to me.

How she trembles *sul tasto*—the vibrations are exquisite.

The tempo of her heartbeat—*accelerando, vivace!*

She gives herself to me fully, and I take.

She is mine.

I have won.

I name my prize thusly:

I take its place in the realm of shadows, and claim its power as my own.

The whispers cease.

I have carved the divine from the profane...

...and now, my little songbird, an encore...

...to set Hell itself a-clamor!

Amen.

II.

THIS IS THE ONE.

THE FUNERAL WAS THREE DAYS AGO.

THREE DAYS....

"UPON MY LIPS, A HUMBLE PLEA..."

"...MAY THE EARTH LIE LIGHT UPON THEE."

SOMEONE MUST HAVE LOVED HIM, TO INTER HIM WITH SUCH CARE. MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T...

DON'T GET SQUEAMISH ON ME, GIRL. AND HOLD THE LIGHT HIGHER...

THIS IS *DARK* WORK.

YOU'D SEEN DEATH BEFORE, BUT NEVER IN SUCH REPOSE...

...AS IF ITS SOUL WAS CLOSE AT HAND.

HE IS...

...HE IS HANDSOME.

=TSK=

ORCUS ISN'T PICKY. HE RECEIVES US ALL--COMELY AND HAGGARD, RICH AND POOR, ALIKE.

TRINKETS LIKE THESE...

...THEY WON'T BE NEEDED IN THE HALLS OF THE DEAD.

...AND COINS? IS FOOD EXPENSIVE IN THE AFTERLIFE?

DID I RAISE A ***FOOL?*** THAT IS THE ***PORTORIUM***--A ***FEE*** FOR FERRYING.

THE BOY'S PASSAGE TO THE UNDERWORLD.

THEN PEOPLE LAID TO REST WITHOUT AN OBOL....

...DO THEY WANDER THE SHORE, WITHOUT REST? IT DOESN'T SEEM FAIR.

LEAVE IT.

FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE, PAY ATTENTION. HOLD THE LIGHT HIGHER, AND KEEP WATCH.

OH, BUT YOU LET YOUR MIND WANDER...

WHEN YOUR HAND REACHED OUT, IT WAS UNDER THE GUISE OF CURIOSITY.

"ONLY A LOOK," YOU TOLD YOURSELF.

*SUCH AN **INNOCENT** LIE.*

TELL THE TRUTH-- YOU WERE **GREEDY.**

THE LOOK IN YOUR EYE GAVE IT AWAY.

WAS IT SHAME THAT GAVE YOU PAUSE?

OR WERE YOU SURPRISED BY THE **WEIGHT** OF SUCH A SMALL COIN?

=GASP=

FOOLISH GIRL! DID YOU LISTEN TO A WORD I SAID?

I DIDN'T MEAN...I-- I'LL PUT IT BACK!

ANOTHER LIE. YOU CAN'T HELP YOURSELF, CAN YOU?

HALT! **THIEF!**

DAMN! IT'S TOO LATE NOW--

RUN!

YOU LISTENED THIS TIME, AND YOU RAN...

...THE GOLD PIECE HOT IN YOUR CLENCHED HAND.

YOU DIDN'T DARE LOOK BACK, BECAUSE YOU KNEW THE PENALTY FOR GRAVE ROBBING....

CAW
CAW
CAW

...WAS DEATH.

RADIX MALORUM EST CUPIDITAS...

IT COULD HAVE BEEN YOU.

NO...IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN YOU.

CHOK+

WITH ONE CLEAN SWING OF A SWORD, ALL EARTHLY TIES WERE SEVERED.

YOU WERE **ALONE**...

...LEFT WITH NOTHING BUT **WORDS**...

FOOLISH GIRL...

...AND A **COIN** THAT WEIGHED HEAVY IN YOUR POCKET.

YOU SOLD WHAT LITTLE YOU HAD TO PAY FOR A BURIAL.

NOT BECAUSE HE DESERVED THE RITES OF SEPULTURE...

BUT IN THE CHANCE THAT IF YOU LAID HIM TO REST...

...HIS VOICE WOULD STOP ECHOING IN YOUR HEAD.

COINS CAN GRANT WISHES, AFTER ALL. (THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TOLD.)

SO YOU BURY IT WITH HIM.

NOW YOU TRULY HAVE **NOTHING.**

THERE. I'VE PAID YOUR FEE.

NOW I BEG YOU, TAKE HIM FAR FROM THE SHORES OF THE LIVING...

IF ORCUS HEARD YOU...

...HE DID NOT ANSWER.

DAYS PASS. OR HAD IT BEEN WEEKS?

IT WAS HARD TO TELL.

WHAT POSSESSED YOU TO GIVE YOUR LAST COIN TO A DEAD MAN? SURELY A BED OF DIRT WOULD HAVE SUFFICED.

WHAT IS IT THEY SAY? "PARCE SEPULTO-- FORGIVE THE INTERRED."

PEOPLE FORGET THAT FORGIVENESS, LIKE RESENTMENT, MUST BE **EARNED**.

AND RIGHT NOW, YOU WOULD GIVE ANYTHING TO SEE THAT COIN AGAIN.

A WISH YOU WOULDN'T ADMIT MAKING, NOT EVEN TO YOURSELF...

CLINK

...GRANTED.

WHO--

BUT WHEN YOU LOOK UP, NO ONE IS THERE.

"IT'S IMPOSSIBLE," YOU THINK. YOU WATCHED HIM **DIE!**

=HUFF= =HUFF=

BUT THE WEIGHT OF THE COIN IN YOUR POCKET TELLS YOU OTHERWISE.

HE'S **BACK.** YOU'LL **NEVER** BE FREE OF HIM.

IT CAN'T--

--IT CAN'T BE--

TO YOUR RELIEF, IT **ISN'T.**

BUT IF NOT HIM, THEN WHO...

OH--

KRIKT

--AAAGH!

STOP! PLEASE, I HAVE YOUR COIN!

I DIDN'T MEAN TO TAKE IT! I DIDN'T KNOW--

EVEN AS YOU SPEAK THE WORDS, YOU KNOW IT'S TOO LATE.

FOOLISH GIRL...

THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL REMAIN.

NOT DEAD, BUT WAITING.

A VOICE IN YOUR EAR TELLS YOU **NO ONE** IS COMING.

THE COIN IN YOUR POCKET DRAGS YOU DOWN.

BUT THE FINGERS...

THE FINGERS IN YOUR MOUTH TASTE LIKE YOUR OWN.

PORTORIUM:

A Fee for Ferrying

By Becky Cloonan...

...with colors by Lee Loughridge, and Letters by Pat Brosseau.

Finis.

III.

DOWN BY THE WATER

Who's to say what happened that day.

After Henry's lover drowned...

Nothing could be made right, and liquor had the man searching for something long gone.

YOUR RING...

He had become mad with it.

DARLING, YOUR RING. I KNOW I'D SEEN IT...

WAS IT WHEN THEY'D PULLED YOU OUT? NO-- NO...

...OR ON THE NIGHTSTAND?

NO. YOU NEVER TOOK IT OFF.

So much so that no one dared see him. Always crying. Always muttering away as if Avery might answer.

OH...

I'M SORRY...

GOD. BABY...

WHAT A DAMNED FOOL I WAS...

!!

HENRY! WHY'RE YOU CRYING?

!

I FOUND THAT RING OF MINE.

I'M SORRY I PUT YOU THROUGH SO MUCH TROUBLE. YOU POOR THING!

÷SOB SOB÷

I'M HERE.

I'M RIGHT HERE.

I'M SORRY I DID THAT TO YOU, BABY...

...

But then there was Avery. So solid and real, gorgeous as the first time Henry laid eyes on him. In that moment, Henry swore he would make things right. What happened that day would stay sunken down, because Henry's twisted conscience was washed clean by Avery's smile...

What a sick joke.

Like a dream, Avery was there and gone.

AH HU HU...

HIC!

GONE, ALWAYS GONE! YOU DEVIL! YOU COLD-HEARTED WHORE!

HENRY, YOU'RE HERE?

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU!

HENRY? GENA.

But stranger than that, Henry had seemed to split in two. One would be at the lake, drinking and muttering about Avery, and the other would be in town...in good spirits, too. In the eyes of the townsfolk, the sullen and reclusive man he used to be seemed to turn over a new leaf.

SHHH, SHHH...

SHHH, SHHH...

And Gena...

AH... AH...

AH... AH...

AH...

AH...

OH HENRY...

Poor Gena took a liking to him. People say they last saw her leaving with Henry before they both turned up missing a couple weeks later. Such a nice couple they made.

HENRY! WHAT'RE YOU DOING OUT THERE?

WHO...?

I'LL COME TO YOU! HA!

MA'AM, PLEASE, I DON'T--

I DON'T KNOW YOU!

ARE YOU ALRIGHT--

OH, HENRY, I CAME AS QUICK AS I COULD!

IT'S OURS!

Henry had hoped that day he could find the courage to join Avery...

OUR BABY AND NO ONE ELSE'S!

ISN'T HE PRECIOUS?

OH, HONEY, YOU'RE CRYING!

And just let all that guilt sink like a stone...

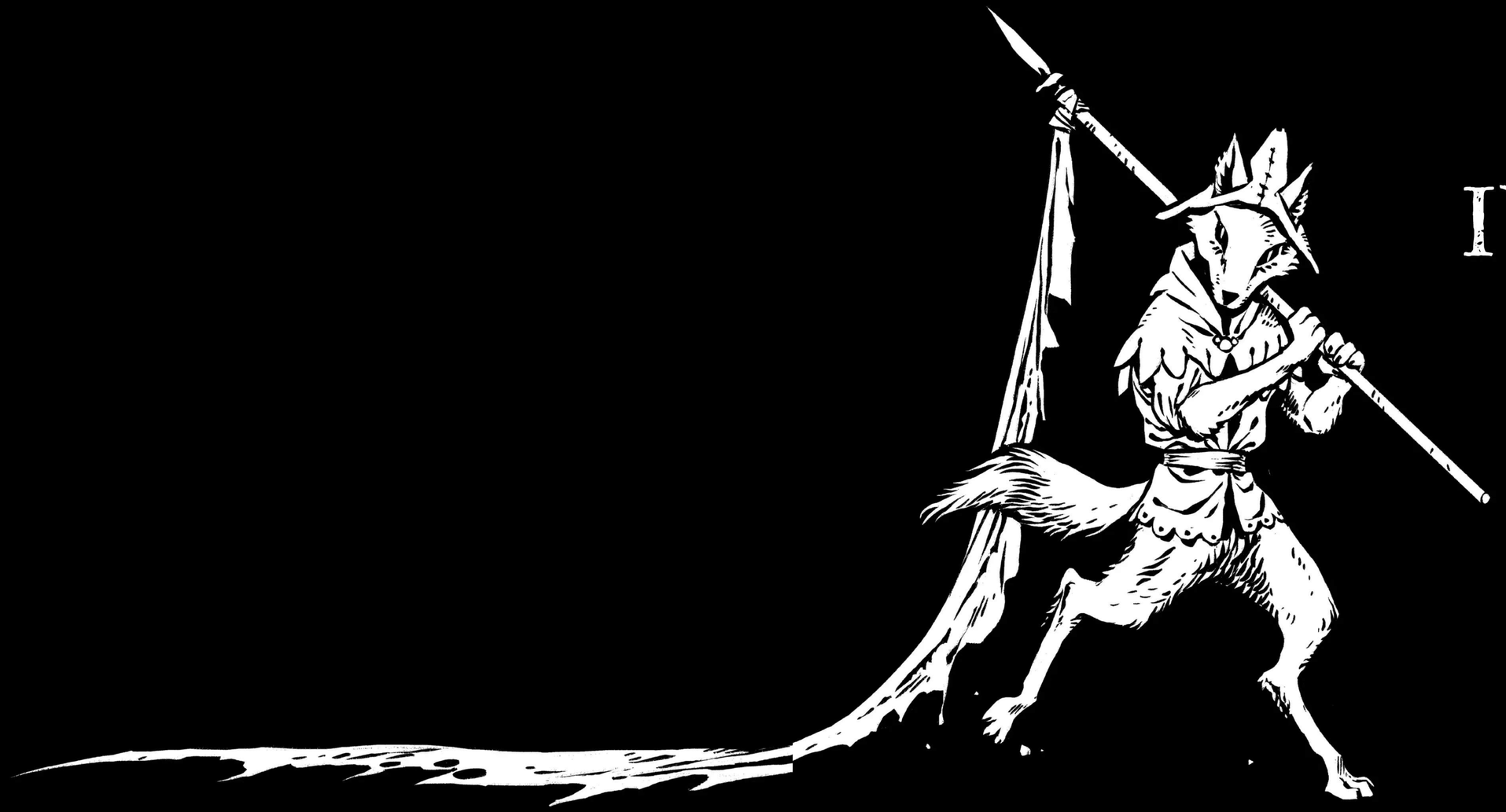
HAHA, HENRY, WHAT'RE YOU--!

LET GO!

AHHHH AHHH NO NO NO...

But who's to say what all happened that day, way down by the water.

IV.



Clover Mountain Coal Company

Pennsylvania

INCORPORATED 1889

As of the Date hereof 9/13/19[illegible], for adequate and sufficient consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is here acknowledged, Clover Mountain Coal Company, Vanesa Del Rey and Andrew Betsch execute this Agreement using the signature block below hereby agree as follows:

"AND OUT OF THE SMOKE CAME FORTH LOCUSTS UPON THE EARTH.

"AND **POWER** WAS GIVEN THEM.

"AS THE SCORPIONS OF THE EARTH HAVE POWER. AND THEIR TORMENT WAS LIKE THE ***TORMENT*** OF A SCORPION WHEN IT STINGS A PERSON."

LET THIS BE A LESSON TO YOU **RED BASTARDS,** STAY OUT OF LOGAN COUNTY!

ZIP

THEY WERE TOLD NOT TO HURT THE GRASS OF THE EARTH, NOR ANY GREEN THING, NOR ANY TREE--

--BUT ONLY THE PEOPLE WHO DO NOT HAVE THE SEAL OF GOD ON THEIR FOREHEADS.

MA'AM? YOU ARE THE WIDOW OF THE LATE OTIS TUCKER?

OTIS TUCKER

YES'M.

MY CONDOLENCES.

EVICTION NOTICE

HIS BODY AIN'T EVEN COLD IN THE DIRT.

IT'S A COMPANY TOWN, MA'AM, IT'S JUST **BUSINESS.** YOUR GIRL LOOKS HALE AND HEARTY ENOUGH TO BE PUT TO WORK, BUT NOT IN NO MINE. SHAME SHE AIN'T A BOY.

AND IF'N THERE AIN'T NO ONE WORKIN', WE NEED MAKE ROOM FOR A FAMILY WHO IS ABLE. YOU UNDERSTAND, OF COURSE.

OF COURSE. COME, ARABELLA, WE BEST BE MOVING ON--

ONE LAST THING, MRS. TUCKER.

THE WORD WENT OUT THIS MORNING AFTER YOUR HUSBAND'S FUNERAL SERVICE...

ANY EMPLOYEE CAUGHT AIDING THE FAMILY OF **UNION AGITATORS** WILL BE **EVICTED** FROM OUR HAPPY COMMUNITY.

"GOOD DAY."

FET FOLK OF THE FOREST. LONG HAVE I LEFT YOU GIFTS AND TREASURES. LONG HAVE I AVOIDED YOUR SPECIAL PLACES AND UPHELD OUR NEIGHBORLY PACT.

I **BESEECH** YOU, GRANT ME **REVENGE** ON THE MEN WHO TOOK MY LOVE. WHO MADE MY GIRL FATHERLESS.

Good neighbor. Bring this poke to the men who have wronged you and in their presence, reveal its contents.

Once it is done, return it to this place. But be warned, the **Yunwi Tsunsdi** will take something in return for this service.

ANYTHING.

STAY HERE, ARABELLA MY LOVE. BE A GOOD GIRL AND DON'T YOU MOVE. I WILL BE BACK.

COMPANY-OFFICE

WHAT DO YOU HAVE THERE, MISS?

MY SATISFACTION.

COMPANY·OFFICE

ARABELLA? WHERE ARE YOU, LOVE?

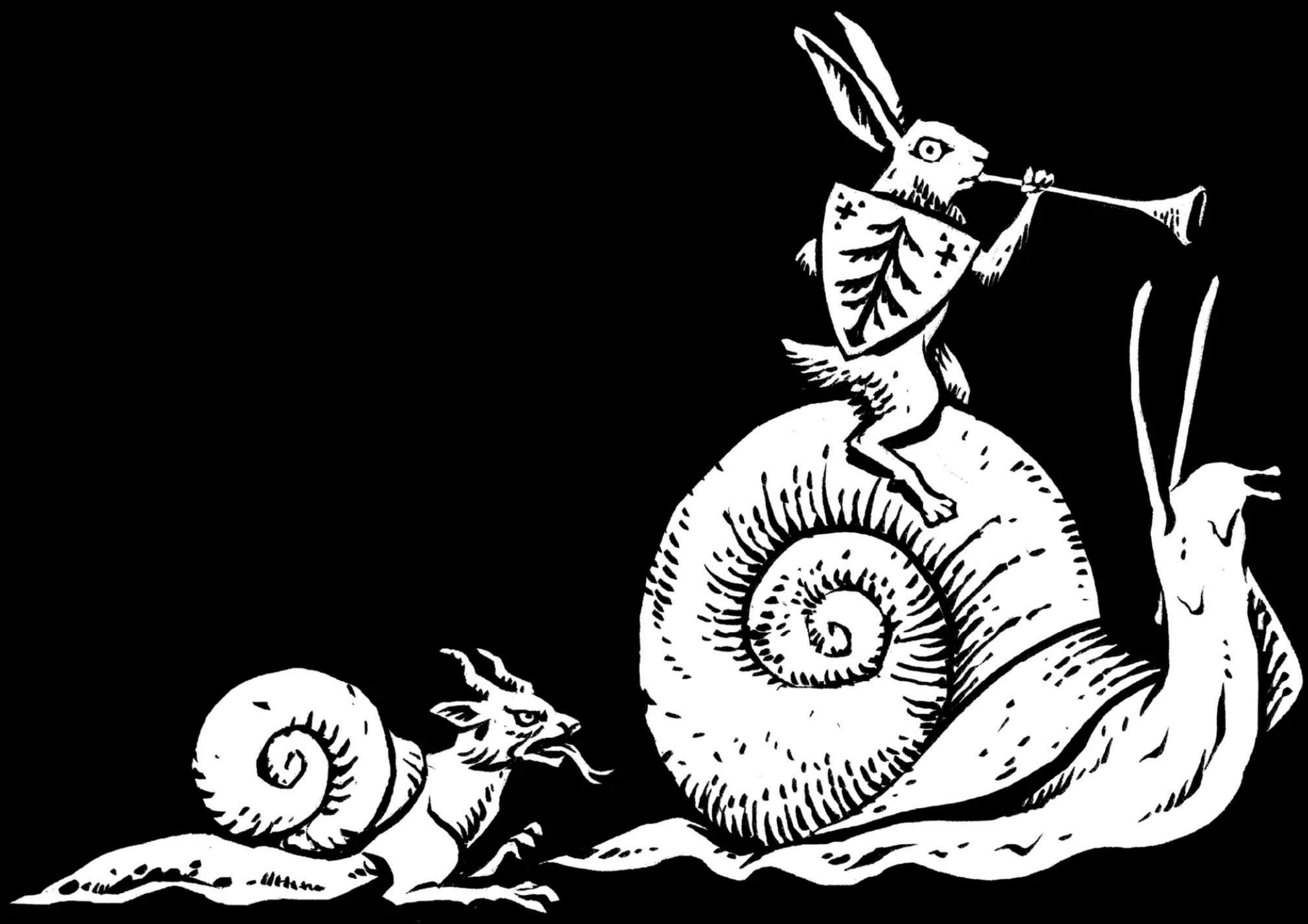
The Yunwi Tsunsdi claim their reward. Many fathers for a fatherless girl.

"Many mothers for one whose life their mother would bargain away."

ARABELLA... NOOOOO!

END

V.



b.1917

JEAN DRODARD

d.2005

IN THE HILLY COUNTRYSIDE WEST OF THE LAC DE NEUCHÂTEL, AS IN ALL THE WORLD I SUPPOSE, THE PEOPLE KNOW OF A PROCESSION OF THE LIVING AND THE DAMNED ON THE WITCHES' SABBATH...

la Chèta

...ANNOUNCING THEIR PASSAGE WITH THUNDERING FOOTSTEPS, THE CLATTERING OF CHAINS, AND AN UNGODLY WAILING IN THE NIGHT. WE FRIBOURGEOIS RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT AND HOLD TO CHRIST, OUR SAVIOR.

MERELY TO HEAR *LA CHÈTA* OUTSIDE ONE'S WINDOW IS ENOUGH TO STRIKE A TERROR OF THE DEVIL IN OUR HEARTS.

TOK

CRASH

BEING SO BOLD AS TO LOOK UPON THE HORDES OF THE DAMNED AS THEY PASS BY IS UNTHINKABLE! BUT MY MOTHER TOLD US OF THE ROAD NOT FAR FROM OUR CHALET WHERE *LA CHÊTA* PASSES, AND WHAT OUR GRANDFATHERS FOUND IN THOSE WOODS BELOW THE CREUX DU VAN.

BERNARD

This far down?

FRANÇOIS

I tell you, I heard a scream. Someone is hurt, somewhere.

Could it have been a *chamois?*

François...

FRANÇOIS!

Abandon the sled.

IT SO HAPPENED THAT MY GRAND-UNCLE WAS, THAT VERY EVENING, DREAMING OF RUNNING AWAY.

So that worthless son of Gregor's thinks he's too good for the life of an **armailli,** eh?

I bet Jules is halfway across the Alps by now.

Rudolfine is convinced he is already dead, killed.

He'd rather carry a pike than a shepherd's crook!

Go on to the midnight mass without me--I want to reset my snares.

ALBAN

This one is in **love.**

SHH

MARKUS

Toujour un *braconnier!* But take Phillipe with you. He adores you, you know.

PAULINE

Theodor... is it true?

Are you in love?

The noble Kunigonde suffers the hopeless courtship of all her young charges.

Oh no, not that Appenzeller woman...

How terribly boring for her after enduring that old donkey's advances!

AT THAT TIME, THE SCHOOL HAD RECENTLY EMPLOYED THE FETCHING YOUNG WIDOW OF A WEALTHY PORCELAIN MERCHANT.

a b c d e

I tell you, the lady has appetites...

...only a **man** can satisfy...

Salaud! Imbécile! Connard!

Oh!

I'm going out. Help Maman get ready for midnight mass.

I'll be home before you have to leave.

What's made you so cross?

Alban tweak your nose?

He's going to marry soon; he'll be too busy to notice you.

SNF

You'll have a nice life.

You're leaving?

You're leaving us?

Won't you miss Maman?

Who will wash your clothes when they get dirty?

:SOB:

NOOO!!

THEO... IS IN TROUBLE...

Well... that's the end of the road.

It's all cross-country until I reach La Ferme Robert.

It's getting dark...

In the morning I'll set out for Noiraigue-Les Œillons-- I'm sure that's where Jules ran away to.

Won't he be surprised to see me!

Maman is certainly missing me by now...

OH!

Kaiser Spätzle?

What are you doing all the way out here?

Well that settles it.

I'll have to turn back and deliver you to your mistress!

Hey!

Don't run off!

Oh.

WHUHG!

AAAAAAAAAAAA

Jules?

Jules Julemy?

I thought you joined the mercenaries...

I was going to come find you!

What are you doing here? Who are these others?

Him and him, I don't know...

This one, he says he used to deliver milk in Gorgier.

KVRIGONDE?

How did we come to this place...

...my darling?

I waited for you. For an hour. In our secret place. And then I saw you with--

Alban?

Did she tell you she would wait to remarry until you came of age?

Yes...

She said that to me, too.

But then your shoulders broaden, your beard sprouts, your voice cracks.

It should please her...

But it doesn't.

I DON'T WANT ALBAN.

I WANT **YOU.**

SHOW YOURSELF TO ME,

NOW.

Did you think I was her?

She will live out her days marrying fools and killing them...

Hiding from death in the crevice of boyhood...

...until the last of her youth is spent...

SSH.

...and all-tempting innocence shrinks from her grasp.

AAAAAA!

Do not be sad, Theodor.

She would have devoured Phillipe, as man slurps the living oyster from its shell.

I can feel her panic; we will leave this place together and find new hunting grounds...

Dieu du ciel! There's someone in the tree!

MY GRANDFATHER, PHILLIPE BRODARD, NEVER SPOKE OF WHAT HE SAW UNTIL HIS DEATH, SOME SIXTY YEARS LATER. THE KILLINGS ENDED, RENEWING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING THE POWER OF CHRIST OVER EVIL.

END

VI.

the Warmth of the Hunt

by E.M. Carroll

When I died,
it felt like
sinking into
warm butter.

Was that why the knife slid
through me so easily?

A comfort,
in those last few
moments of life...

...and those first
moments of death...

...to believe I was made
to be killed like this...

...and
not that
I had earned
it through
my wickedness.

But then it started.

With the sounding of a terrible horn,
and the dread barking of hounds,

the hunt began.

She was at the forefront,
my beautiful girl,
now robbed of her
dewy beauty
and beset with
the rot of death.

GRR-RR
SNARLLL
BRRRARK BARK
PANT PANT
PANT PANT
GRRRR
SNARL
PANT PANT

Why do you run, my darling?

The phantom horn blared,
sounding like that last
panicked scream.

Didn't you want us here, together?

Isn't that why you told me to meet you so deep in the wood, so no one would find our bones?

Didn't you want us as one flesh after all?

And I did.

So help me God, I did,
so badly I can taste it on
my desiccated tongue even now.

My knife was still lodged in her breast,
but that was not where I had left it.

(If anywhere, it should have
been lodged in mine.)

GRRRRR~!
GRRRO
WF!
RRRAFF
RAF!
SNARRLL

But not like this.

My love,
my love...!

Forgive me...

Not like this!

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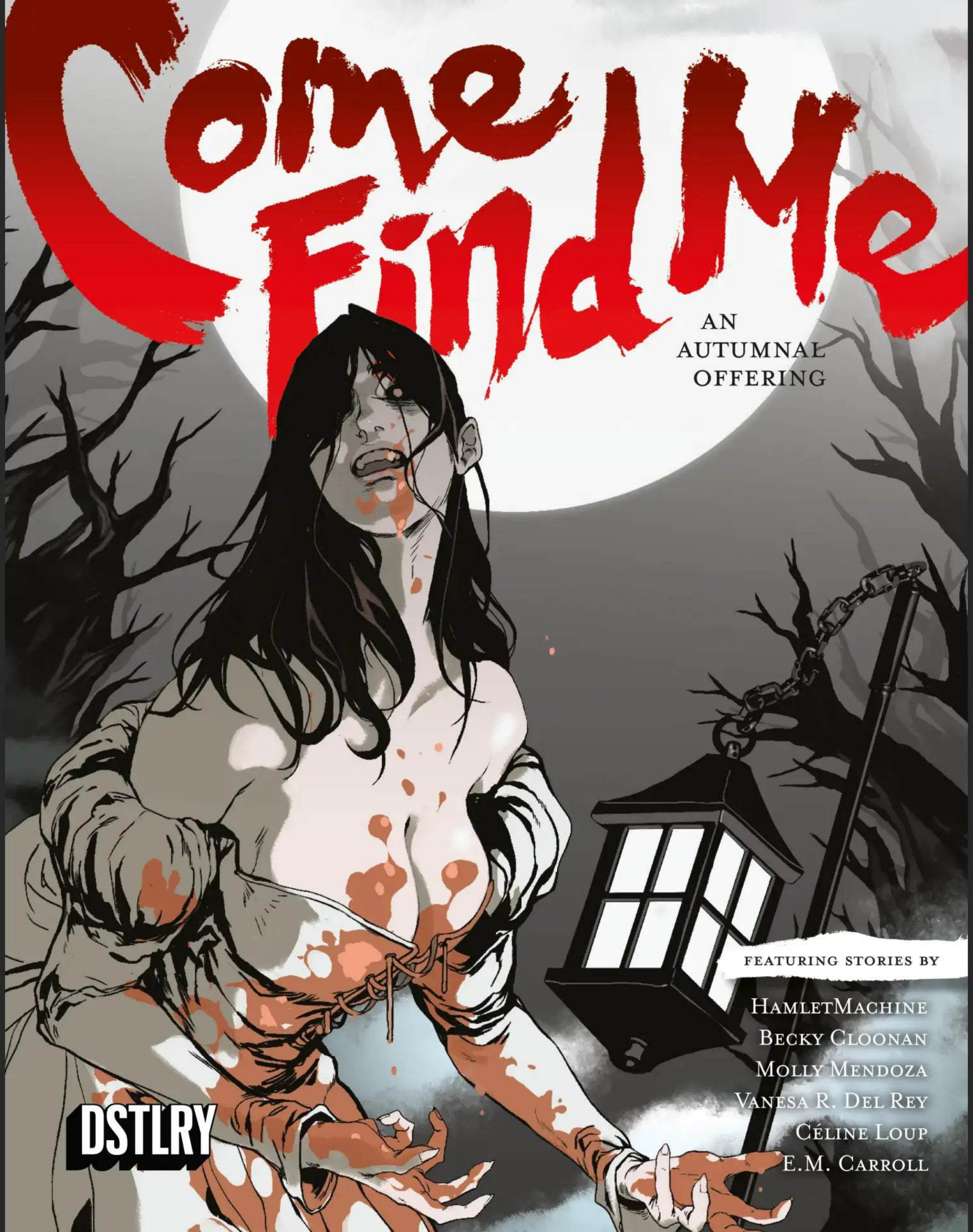

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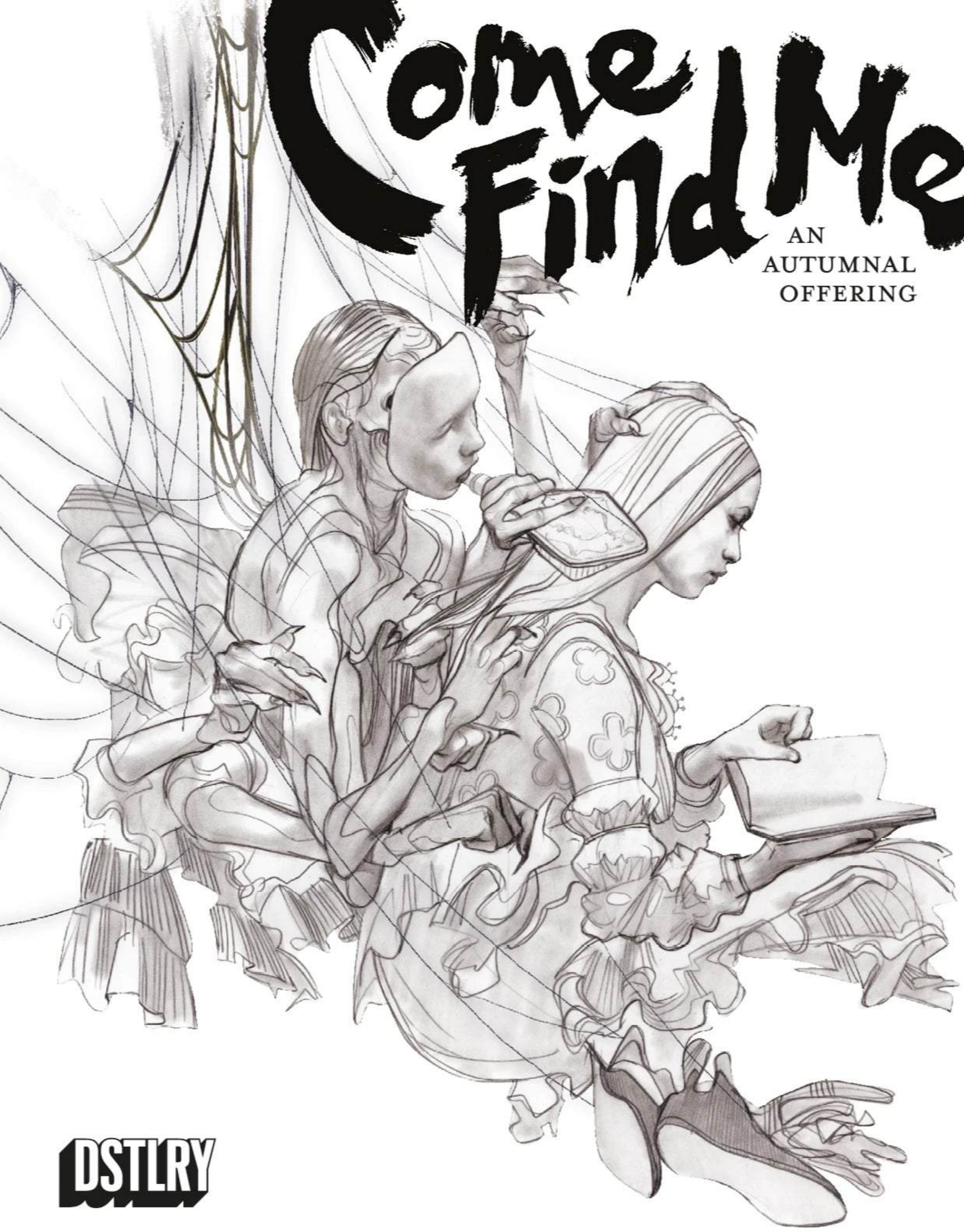

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GhostOfTomJoad

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